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SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

DEPARTMENT FOR WHA/CAR (BENT) AND WHA/PPC (PUCCHETTI)
DEPARTMENT FOR G/TIP (OWEN AND ETERNO)
SOUTHCOM FOR POLAD AND J7

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TAGS: [KCRM](#) [KWMN](#) [OPRC](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [SMIG](#) [JM](#) [TIP](#)

SUBJECT: GOJ LAUNCHES TIP PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

REF: A. STATE 97853

[1](#)B. KINGSTON 01904

SUMMARY

[1](#)1. Summary: The GOJ on August 30 launched a yearlong public awareness campaign to educate its citizens about the dangers of trafficking in persons (TIP). In a move that appears to indicate the GOJ's determination to make sustained efforts against trafficking, the Cabinet Office organized a public forum at Emancipation Park in Kingston with National Security Minister Peter Phillips as the keynote speaker. With Information Minister Burchell Whiteman, senior police officers, and representatives of international organizations and local NGOs in attendance, the tenor of the event was positive and constructive, and seemed to demonstrate that the GOJ has moved beyond its initial, defensive response to its June 3 downgrade to Tier 3 status (Ref A). End Summary.

[1](#)2. At a public forum organized by the Office of the Cabinet and the National Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Task Force, the GOJ on August 30 launched a one-year campaign to educate the Jamaican public about the threat of trafficking in persons. The event was attended by National Security Minister Peter Phillips, Information Minister Burchell Whiteman, Assistant Police Commissioner Charles Scarlette, and representatives of the Bureau of Women's Affairs and the Child Development Agency. Charge also delivered remarks at the event, as did Nidia Casati, Chief of Mission, International Organization for Migration.

USG Calls for Greater Cooperation

[1](#)3. In remarks prepared for the event, Charge d'Affaires stressed the importance of a sustained public awareness campaign in Jamaica in order for citizens to be able to identify and combat trafficking in their own communities. He highlighted the USG's contribution to the issue in the form of a USD 250,000 public education campaign administered by USAID in 2004 and 2005. He also underlined the importance of law enforcement action to convict traffickers, including "swift and decisive action" against "unscrupulous airline employees or nightclub owners, corrupt officials, or deviant international tourists." He acknowledged existing USG-GOJ efforts to combat drug and gun trafficking and money laundering, and called for similar cooperation to stem human trafficking.

Phillips Promises GOJ Action

[1](#)4. In the keynote address, National Security Minister Peter Phillips, whose ministry has assumed responsibility for combating TIP, identified human trafficking as a problem inherent to the increased flows of capital and people that are a part of globalization. He told the audience that, although there exists no comprehensive estimate of the extent of the problem in the Caribbean, Jamaica has a responsibility to fight the problem as a member of the international community. Phillips further stressed that, given its history with slavery, Jamaica should be at the forefront of the fight against trafficking, a modern-day form of slavery.

[1](#)5. Phillips, who was acting as Prime Minister while P.J. Patterson was off the island, demonstrated a strong grasp of the subject matter, drawing an important distinction between cross-border and internal trafficking and labeling both as serious problems in Jamaica. Citing a component of the trafficking definition that is often overlooked in the local context, he added that all children under 18 are trafficking victims if they are engaged, even consensually, in commercial sexual activity. Phillips said definitively that the GOJ does not condone trafficking in persons, which he said weakens the country's moral fiber and economic standing. He

concluded by saying that the GOJ was ready to play its part in the fight against trafficking, and that it would begin to take definitive measures to do so, including investigations of establishments suspected of participating in trafficking and related activities. Phillips also announced that, with the support of a USD 150,000 grant from the Inter-American Development Bank, the GOJ would undertake its own comprehensive study of trafficking in Jamaica.

16. The GOJ spent approximately USD 15,000 on the event, which was not well attended by the public due to poor publicity and a thunderstorm that passed overhead about 30 minutes before the program began. However, a strong media presence, including television, radio, and newspaper, ensured broad exposure after the fact. The hosts made several references to the fact that there would be more public awareness events in the next 12 months.

17. Comment: Minister Phillips' remarks were notably constructive and demonstrated a fairly thorough understanding of trafficking, in contrast to obviously disingenuous remarks he made in July (Ref B). Because Phillips was serving as acting Prime Minister in P.J. Patterson's absence, and because he launched his campaign for the People's National Party presidency on August 21, his remarks may also have been delivered in that light. However, the GOJ's sustained response over the last three months to Department's Tier 3 Action Plan seem to indicate that the public forum, and Phillips' comments, are more than just window-dressing. We will continue to monitor and report on the extent of GOJ follow-through after the Presidential Determination on Tier 3 countries is made in September. End Comment.
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